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that to receive any benefits from Erasmus Smith's funds, the masters, and ushers of all schools aided from them must subscribe to the two first canons of the church of Ireland; In the act of last session referred to at page 17, of the last Belfast Magazine, the restriction is still further confirmed, by making it incumbent, to have the consent of the bishop of the diocese to any grant, under the circumstances of the act, for erecting the additional school-houses proposed to be built under the plan of extending the schools of Erasmus Smith. Such restrictions will essentially limit the benefits to be derived from this fund, and it is painful to observe that this act which was introduced into parliament under the auspices of the Primate, tends to continue restrictions, which are illiberal, and which are likely to defeat the full effects of a plan calculated in other respects to do so much good.

This circumstance with many others of a similar nature, confirms the sentiment, that the temper of the times as manifested in the present system of legislation will not permit us to hope at present for the establishment of a national system of education on liberal principles. To effect the important advantages of education, the exertions of individuals must be persevered in, unaided by assistance from the national purse, which would only be granted on a sacrifice of independence, by submitting to the dominancy of the church establishment, and by increasing the patronage and influence of the executive government.

K.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

HAVING lately had an opportunity of seeing a parcel of Ame-

rican newspapers, I was struck with some statements in the following paper, which appeared to me to be just. If they teach us duly to appreciate the advantages of a free government, and prove the absurdity of an overweening confidence in all which belong to ourselves, merely because they are our own, they may be of service in your pages. Two great errors are often combined, to think too highly of ourselves, and too meanly of our neighbours. It appears to be the prevailing fashion, unjustly and unreasonably, to despise America. In the following essay justice is done to their institutions, without misrepresenting the tendency of the manners, laws, and institutions of the old country. If we ever grow wiser, we must be willing to see our errors. Neither individuals nor nations advance in knowledge without cherishing a disposition to search out and acknowledge their defects.

A READER.

CONTRAST BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA.

(Extracted from the National Intelligencer, published at Washington.)

WHAT then are the peculiar causes of this unrivalled felicity?

We confidently answer, the pursuit of a political course in most respects directly the reverse of that pursued by the nations of the old world.

In those nations governments are usurpations on public opinion; *here* they are direct emanations from it.

With them the great end of government is to controul the public will; *here* its great end is to carry it into effect.

In the old world government is the monopoly of a few, by means of which corruption and fraud riot in extravagance, on the blood and la-

bour of the people; *here* it is the common property of all, deriving its existence from the will of the whole nation, and dispensing its blessings impartially among all.

In the old world government is the great source of crime; *here* it is its most effectual restraint.

In the old world government is maintained by force; *here* it is supported by affection.

Hence, in the old world gigantic navies and vast standing armies are indispensable; while *here* they are almost entirely unnecessary, and injurious, instead of beneficial to the popularity and energy of those in power.

Hence, too, while in the old world war is the constant aim and occupation, peace is *here* interwoven with our wishes and interests.

In the old world, religion is the effect of coercion and hypocrisy, and is only maintained by oppressive taxes: while *here* it is the free emanation of the conscience, is sincere, and is supported by voluntary contribution.

In the old world, the pursuits of individuals are restrained by unjust and pernicious regulations, and iniquitous monopolies; *here* every man is permitted to employ his time, his talents and his money in the occupation most congenial to his own mind.

After this rapid view of the discordancy between our principles and conduct, and those of the nations of Europe, it is natural to enquire into the points of resemblance.

This may enable us to decide whether the system which we have adopted is merely a modification in its details of the systems practised in the old world, or whether it is not a system fundamentally different.

This is an important enquiry. It is not merely a speculation amusing to the philosopher in his closet; its

decision necessarily leads to practical effects of the utmost importance. On it will depend the propriety, even safety, of consulting foreign precedents, and of being guided, in doubtful cases, by the experience of foreign nations.

If our system be in a higher degree homogeneous with, than discordant from the systems of foreign powers, we may perhaps safely be guided by the course they have pursued; but if, on the contrary, for one point of resemblance there be ten of hostility, our great duty must be in doubtful cases, to avoid an example so pregnant with ruin.

We have shown that in the political structure of our governments, there is scarcely any coincidence; that, in fact, the fundamental principles of the one are in absolute and direct hostility to the other.

We have likewise shown that our condition is equally different from the condition of the nations of Europe.

So far, then, as these two important considerations go, the inference is irresistible, and we must pronounce the experience of the old world only worthy of our attention as a beacon to guard us against error and misery.

The only branch of enquiry that remains for consideration, is how far our system resembles the foreign system in the security it establishes for the maintenance of *civil rights*.

These, we are told, are the great ends of government, and that the government that secures them must be good; and *here* we are referred to England. Of that country it is the boast, that the life, personal liberty, property, and good name of her citizens are defended with unimpeachable justice. The *common law* is vaunted as their great guardian; and, inasmuch as we have

naturalised it, we are said to have adopted a system similar to that of Britain.

Let us examine this subject concisely in detail. That the jurisprudence of England has deservedly ranked her high among her sister nations of Europe, is indisputable. That it cherishes fewer seeds of slavery, and that it pays more respect to the natural rights of man than any other system of cotemporaneous origin will not be denied. When, therefore, we look back upon the lot of the old world, we behold with delight the comparatively bright displays of justice, liberty, and humanity, made in that distinguished island; and we see her towering infinitely above her neighbours.

But let us not be infatuated by this contrast. The present enquiry is not into the relative condition of the British and French nations, or into the relative advantages of their systems of government. It is confined entirely to Great Britain and the United States. It may be, that Britain will, on this comparison, sink as low, as in the other she rose high.

It is true that we have naturalised the *common law* of England; but it is equally true that this common law has been so modified by our own statutory law, that a marked difference exists between the two systems.

In England the life of the subject is said to be secure against unjust invasion. It is secured by independent judges, and an impartial jury. Let this be granted, for the sake of argument; still the existing laws may be, and in fact are devised in such a way as awfully to jeopardize human life. How many crimes in the British code, compared to the American, are capital; and what a prodigal forfeiture of life constantly takes place for light and trivial

offences! Besides, can the lives of subjects be secure when it is in the power of an irresponsible government, whenever it pleases, to hurry the nation into war, and to consign its subjects to distant and dangerous expeditions, where the chance of surviving is very inconsiderable? And where is the difference to the wretched victim, whether he dies in the field of battle, or in an hospital, at the call of an ambitious government, or on a scaffold in expiation of his offences? When too we consider that these offences are, for the greater part, the offspring of bad government, and the wretched penury to which thousands are thereby reduced, the government becomes the criminal instead of the nominal offender, and the murder or theft for which the latter forfeits his life, is in fact the act of the former.

How opposite to this is our situation? Capital punishments are rare; atrocious offences almost equally so; and war, with all its horrors, known only as a theme of execration.

If we view the influence of the common law of England on personal liberty, we shall find it equally different from our system. There a sentiment of avarice appears to have gained so complete an ascendant, that the least invasion of property produces a sacrifice of liberty, if not life. Allusion is not here meant exclusively to frauds which ought in every well regulated society to be severely punished; but to those misfortunes in business which often make an honest man the debtor of another. In England, a jail is his lot—there he languishes for years—perhaps he dies. How different the lot of misfortune in the United States. The law, on a surrender of his effects, screens the person of the debtor from confinement—He begins a new career—The smiles of

prosperity again irradiate his path. He soon retrieves the errors of indiscretion or confidence, and rises to respectability, perhaps distinction.

But, the advocates of the British system, driven from those strong holds, fly to their fortress. Property, say they, is in England better protected than in any other country on earth. Whatever guards you have formed around it, you have borrowed from us. But in this vivid eulogium we behold the illusion of days that are past! There are two circumstances that most strikingly contrast the situation of the United States and England in this respect. The first relates to the relative expenses of conducting law suits, the second to the relative taxes imposed on property, whose value, it is evident, must materially depend on these circumstances. Now under the boasted common-law of England a debt cannot be recovered, without a previous delay of several years, or without the payment of extravagant fees to lawyers; and if the controversy relate to landed property, a life may be spent before the decision of the suit. Can that property be said to be secure, which is exposed to such invasions, whereby its rightful owner may be kept out of its enjoyment for his whole life? Is it not the inevitable tendency of such a system to place the scales of justice exclusively in the hands of the rich, who if they are not invested with the power of turning the beam, are clothed with the equally dangerous prerogative of keeping it in equilibrio as long as they please; thereby unjustly preserving in their own hands the property of others.

With regard to taxes, it may be safely affirmed, that the assessment in England is ten times as high as in the United States,

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON THE USE OF TRANSLATIONS;
APPLIED TO PRECEPTORS AND PUPILS.

IF not partial to my religion and country, I would be inclined to think that in the British dominions, the learned languages are taught on plans the most rational, and withal by persons having a greater regard to the cause of christianity and truth, and of instilling into the mind the principles of true philosophy, than in most other places in Europe. But even here the views of the community are not combined, nor are they willing they should be established by the same common laws, as those of individuals. For example, in the case now before us, some are disposed to admit and encourage the constant use of translations as a help for making proficiency in the language to which the attention of their pupils is directed; others, again, wish to discard such a practice, or at the farthest, to use it only on certain occasions. Hence a sort of extravagance clearly prevails on both sides, which it is my intention to exhibit. But the only satisfactory method I can have recourse to in performing this is, by examining the sentiments of a translator, and endeavouring to point out their conformity or non-conformity to the promotion of classical learning. The individual, then, whom I chose for this purpose is Mr. John Clarke,* (once master of the public grammar school at Hull) who has been of infinite service in

* The reason which induced me to select Mr. Clarke is, that he has written a professed treatise on the advantages of translations. Wherefore, the observations made on their use in the Latin tongue, may also apply to those in the Greek, &c.